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SUBJECT: UNMIS CONFIRMS HANDS-ON VERIFICATION OF SAF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SOUTH

**¶1.** (SBU) In the wake of declarations by senior GoSS officials that the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have violated the CPA timetable for withdrawal of its forces from the South, CG met with a UNMIS officials to discuss how UNMIS is tracking SAF withdrawal. They shared the following.

**¶2.** (SBU) UNMIS has established a system whereby the SAF, if it is to receive credit for troop withdrawals, must provide UNMIS a list of flights redeploying troops north. UNMIS logs this, and a UNMO team goes to the departure sight to verify that the number of troops listed embarks. This process is duplicated at the other end, to ensure that the forces have actually been withdrawn. On March 31, for example, flights carrying 348 SAF troops left Juba and arrived in Khartoum.

**¶3.** (SBU) Based on this, UNMIS is confident that the SAF is adhering to the CPA withdrawal timetable. UNMIS believes that approximately 32 percent of SAF forces have left, although it notes that the SAF did not agree to a troop census until January 9. Some forces were withdrawn prior to that date, and the fact that UNMIS did not have total numbers until then does not permit UNMIS to declare with full certainty that the percentage is exactly right. UNMIS notes that the GoSS would like to see SAF withdrawal progress at a faster pace, but that, according to the CPA, SAF forces are not required to reach the 50 percent drawdown level until June.

**¶4.** (SBU) CG cited claims from various quarters that the SAF is withdrawing on one hand, but recycling the same forces back into the South through clandestine nighttime flights and barge traffic on the Nile. Aware of these accusations, UNMIS has stationed a permanent presence at various airfields and along the Nile. One unscheduled flight arrived in Juba after sunset, but it was a case of mechanical problems, and the aircraft was not carrying troops. UNMIS flight ops offered that landing troops in isolated bush airstrips at night would be dancing with death. The airstrips are short, unlighted, and possess no homing beacons. UNMIS has detected no river redeployments south up the White Nile.

**¶5.** (SBU) To date, the only verified violation of the withdrawal timetable has been ticketed to the SPLA in the East. The failure of the North to expeditiously stand up the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), and continued reluctance to do so, meant that the force charged with taking charge of the SPLA occupied areas in the East was non-existent. The CPA does not provide for reoccupation of that area by the SAF.

**¶6.** (SBU) Comment: Until someone can provide something other than hearsay evidence that the SAF has found a way to bypass UNMIS measures, we remain unconvinced by

accusations that the SAF remains fully in place, or is reinforcing in the South. We note for the record that the SAF officers whom we have met have expressed delight that they are going home, some for the first time in years. End comment.

STEINFELD